

Betty Box

Betty Box's parents and their two sons Sydney and Norman lived in a three roomed property in 51 Ravenscroft Road, Beckenham during the five years before WW1. Her father, Frank Edward was a self-employed nurseryman and florist based in 281 Beckenham Road.

Betty's parents celebrated Betty's birth on 25th September 1915 by moving into a seven roomed house called Rosherville at 283 Beckenham Road adjoining the nursery business.

It is not known where Betty and her oldest brother **Sydney Box** (by seven years) were educated but both became film makers. In 1942, together Sydney's wife Muriel, they joined Verity Films helping to produce over 200 wartime propaganda shorts.

Betty began producing her own films. In 1949 she made the comedy film *Don't Ever Leave Me* which featured Beckenham actor, **Maurice Denham**, and Petula Clark, very well known in Penge and Beckenham for her live appearances in the local music halls.



Betty Box in 1959

Following World War II, Betty switched to feature films, beginning with *The Years Between* in 1946. When Sydney took control of Gainsborough Pictures that year, he named her Head of Production at the Poole Street, Hoxton studio, where she produced ten films during the next two years, including *When the Bough Breaks* (1947) and three Huggetts films: *Here Come the Huggetts* (1948), *Vote for Huggett* and *The Huggetts Abroad*, both in 1949.

When Gainsborough closed in 1949, Betty moved to J. Arthur Rank's Pinewood Studios, where she collaborated with director Ralph Thomas on some 30-odd films, including the highly successful *Doctor* series, beginning with *Doctor in the House* in 1954 and ending with *Doctor in Trouble* in 1970.

The second in the series, *Doctor at Sea* made in 1955. It featured a very young Brigitte Bardot singing JE NE SAIS PAS composed for her actor/composer Hubert Gregg who lived on the Sydenham border. Beckenham film stars James Robertson Justice and the much loved Maurice Denham also leading roles.

She was married to Peter Rogers, producer of the *Carry On* film series, from 24 December 1948 until her death in 1999. They did not have any children, but their godson was actor and theatre producer Marc Sinden, the son of Sir Donald Sinden, who starred for Betty Box in, amongst other films, *Doctor in the House* and *Doctor at Large*.

In December 2013, Pizza Express made its own tribute to Betty Box followed up a detailed appraisal of her career by a reporter for the Bromley Times:

[Link to Bromley Times](#)